



PORTALS

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PORTALS

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NORTH CENTRAL
STUDENT WRITING

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FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to introduce the sixteenth edition of Portals, which is composed of the winning entries of PU/NC's annual writing contest, sponsored by the English Department and funded by proceeds from the book sale. Portals itself is made possible because of the PU/NC administration's pride in the excellence of its students and its desire to support those who accomplish so much on this campus.

The entries published in the Freshman Division were submitted by students in English Composition classes, while those in the Open Contest came from the student body at large. Whether written by assignment or by personal choice, these works are only a sampling of the talents of many students who have found their University truly the portal to greater understanding.

Director and Editor,
Student Writing Contest

Professor Barbara Lootens

Faculty Judges

Professor Barbara Lootens
Professor John Stanfield
Dr. Patricia Buckler

Student Judges

Sue Bortell
David Grau
Denise Hoff

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A ROOM WITH NO FUTURE

by E. Thomas Sherry

In the early morning hours gray winter sunlight filters through the nicotine-stained glass windows, transforming the room where I live into a jaundiced cathedral. The sun's murky light falls on my face. I awaken with a start, believing that I am home. Fragments of the dream skitter back into the recesses of my unconscious as I realize that I am still here in the Department of Correction. The feeling is no less disappointing than it would be if St. Peter were to swing wide the pearly gate only to discover the promised land on fire. The gate behind has closed and locked. The waking nightmare of prison flows on uninterrupted.

I have three roommates, and we all sleep within three feet of each other. While the others slumber, restless wayfarers in the Freudian otherworld, I light a Camel, inhale deeply and reach up to unbolt one of the windows. The smoke curls around once and escapes outside on a wave of hot dry air like the living fleeing a mausoleum. These rare moments of solitude are the only semblance of privacy that the state will allow.

Some of us are here justly, some unjustly. It is doubtful if anyone of us was locked up for living responsibly, so regardless of the degree of irresponsibility or deliberate offense, we are all punished together: helpless derelicts and murderers, Coke machine vandals and rapists, drunk drivers and child molesters, first offenders and career criminals, accountants and gang warriors, schoolteachers and sociopaths, factory workers and extortionists. We are all ghosts locked away in society's attic, forgotten by all but the few who still write sometimes.

From the top bunk where I lie smoking the room appears a cluttered myriad of institutional uniformity and personal identity. Crammed into a mere 9'x14' cell are two sets of bunkbeds, four standing wall lockers, and four wooden nightstands with drawers, all alike. Three feet of neutral living space run up the center of the room, the state's version of the proverbial sardine can. I chuckle to myself, recalling the time I visited the Detroit Zoo when it had fallen into a state of disrepair. The animals were suffering from overcrowding and neglect. Many were underfed and sick. They milled sluggishly about in their confined areas. In their powerlessness they silently pled for help from the passing visitors. An enraged public cried out to close the zoo in the name of decency. In response the money was raised to upgrade the zoo; the animals were given a future. Asleep on the next bunk, my roommate snores loudly and rolls over, so close I flinch as his breath reaches me. In retaliation I blow a flurry of smoke rings at him. I return to my thoughts, musing over the fact that, unlike the animals's cage, my room has no future.

The personal effects of four men who never would have associated with each other were it not for their transplantation here are scattered about in disarray. The floor is littered with shoes, state issue work boots and flip-flops. The lockers are piled high with coats. The nightstands are bestrewn with wadded up blue state clothes, a Bible, textbooks, pens and newspapers. On one, an abandoned game of solitaire waits patiently to be finished. Crumpled centerfolds recline in the shadows. A mouse, delighted with his find, is contentedly nibbling stray M&M's under the bed.

Pictures of the ones left far behind smile out from cigarette pack frames holding them upright. The innocent eyes of wives, children and parents never see the vulgarity lived out before them as the correctional machine grinds the souls of those

who live here. They never smell the mildewed socks, the garbage, the Spam can ashtrays, or the stench of the adjoining sewage treatment plant. They never feel, never hope, never hate, never cry. They are two dimensional reminders of a past time when things were, somehow, less complicated. The photographs remind us of how grateful we should have been for that simplicity but weren't, how much we could have shared and didn't, how much we might have loved and wouldn't, and how much different we and they must be now.

For these few moments stillness hangs empty in the early morning hours, a thin disguise for the storm to come. The men in blue uniform, not substantially different from our own, will begin bellowing orders and threats over the PA system at full volume telling us when to get up, when to eat, when to sit down, when to stand up, when to smoke, when to use the toilet, when to line up and march in columns of two, when to shower and when to go to bed. Another day, just like yesterday and just like tomorrow, will begin once more, a ditto of time since and time to come.

VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

by Tom McLaughlin

"Sharmidoo, Pat Davis, Sharmidoo!" taunted the young boys who knew better. All of them sped by on bicycles, some with fancy chrome fenders, some with plain white ones, and still others with no fenders at all. The boys kept a safe distance from Pat Davis. Who could tell what would happen if he caught you?

Pat Davis was crazy; everybody knew that. This was a small town with small-town attitudes. Every small town had one crazy, and the gossip always made him out to be crazier than he really was. Pat Davis was ours.

Pat Davis. No one called him Mr. Davis, or Pat. He was crazy, and that demanded some strange sort of respect. So it was that everyone in town called him Pat Davis.

The older folks (the dying breed) would talk over endless cups of coffee in the White Front Cafe about how forty years ago Pat Davis was as normal as you or I. It seems he once owned a small, pretty Cape Cod. A white picket fence guarded three sides of a manicured lawn, while roses gracefully embraced white, fragile trellises. Pat Davis owned the first Packard that Mason City had ever seen and brought the first television into town. Being the only plumber, he was well-known by everybody, and was generally perceived as an ambassador of good will (without portfolio).

A whispered rumor has it that at one time he was deeply in love with a girl from Greenview. No one remembers her name, of course, but the older folks say there were wedding bells in the air. From what I hear, Pat Davis was happier than anyone could hope to be, and his darling was sweeter than the dew on those roses of his.

On a shopping trip to Springfield, she had a crash in the big Packard. Pat Davis rushed the thirty-two miles to see her in the hospital, where he kept a long vigil at her

bedside. Some say she did come to long enough to ask Pat Davis if he still loved her. He replied simply, "Sure I do."

She died that same night.

Pat Davis never replaced his Packard. The house paint faded, cracked, then peeled. The picket fence rotted at its roots and disappeared. The roses, betrayed by circumstance, faded in the long night.

Pat Davis stopped plumbing and started walking the streets at night. If you should ever meet him, you would hear him mumbling to no one in particular, "Sure me do, sure me do," his head shaking vaguely, his eyes not seeing.

No one can tell you where Pat Davis lives. He just keeps walking the same streets, and the same kids keep jeering, "Sharmidoo, Pat Davis, Sharmidoo."

THE DEMISE OF THE FAMILY FARM

by Maureen Guse

Eight years ago when my son was born, I began to dream, as mothers do, about the day that he would take over the family farm, following in the path that his father, his grandfather, and his great grandfather before him had taken. Because the farm economy is so deeply depressed, today I hope that my son will grow up to be anything *but* a farmer. I know now that what I hear in the news is true--the family farm is dying, and I am seeing firsthand the pain of its demise.

My family and my husband's family have been farmers for years. The land that we live on now was in fact deeded to the family in 1879. For 108 years the farm and the country life had nurtured youngsters who learned the ways of farming, grew up, and began the cycle again. Eight years ago I saw no reason to change the way it had been for over a century; my son would grow up and take over the family farm, raising his children in the same way that he had been raised. Now the course of our lives has been changed by the failure of the farm to provide. A family cannot be supported when the business operates at a loss, and the farm has been losing money for the past three years.

The failure of the family farm as a business is not only my personal loss but the loss of many families like mine. My family is typical of the many middle-sized farm families that today are struggling to survive, and we do not fully understand why we are failing in our struggle to maintain our way of life. We did things right. We were cautious. We did not over-extend ourselves. We were not the free spending "wheeler dealers" of the early 1970's or the make-your-money-and-get-out type. We grew up farming; we lived farming.

Like my husband, I was born on a farm. Although our families were not rich, we had a good life, and it was a good way to grow up. As children, we learned responsibility and a love for the freedom of the rural life. We were accountable for the welfare of the land, and we felt in return it would answer our needs. A good day's work was rewarded by a comfortable living.

Imperceptibly but slowly, our lives began to change. Each year saw rising prices, rising costs, and a diminishing return. My husband and I took outside jobs and compensated for the shrinking farm income by dipping into our paychecks and our savings. The rising costs and diminishing returns were balanced by hard work and frugality.

Then the scales were tipped by a weight of power that we could not counter-balance--the government. "Embargo", "deficit", and "foreign policy" were words of the government, not of the small farmer, but they affected us nonetheless. We were middle class country people being thrown into the tangled web of world politics and big business, a web that today is choking the life out of many farms like ours.

The typical 300 to 500-acre farm compares to a small town business. Like the small town business, the small-to-mid-size family farm is made up of middle class families, simple working people with no illusions of grandeur or ambitions of great wealth. There is one difference--unlike the small town business which is, for the most part, affected only by the town and its immediate area, the farmer, no matter how small his business, is profoundly affected by what happens throughout the globe. The embargoes of the late 1970's created a ripple that today seems to have turned into a tidal wave. The unfortunate fact is that the middle class farm is in danger of washing away in its wake, and even the heavy weight of the government is unable to quell it.

Farmers have optimistically challenged the odds for decades. When Mother Nature turned wicked and destroyed the crops, they spat in her face and planted again. Why then are disgruntled farmers leaving their farms in great numbers now? I feel the answer for many lies in situations similar to ours. We are not losing our way of life because of lack of effort, poor production, or wasteful spending. We are losing because of conditions and policies that we cannot change. Our lives have been controlled by men who have no idea of just what we are losing and how precious it is to us.

What we are losing is not just a small, perhaps insignificant, business but a way of life that has been willed to us by our ancestors. The effect of our failure is catastrophic. For a farmer to commit suicide was unheard of ten years ago. Today it is an uncomfortably commonplace occurrence.

In my own life I have seen the deterioration of my husband's health and the alienation of family members as the farm that had provided a livelihood for generations slowly slips into debt. The entire family has felt the strain of trying to make ends meet. Perhaps the reason why a fourth or fifth-generation farmer gives up is not solely because of financial loss but because of the emotional toll that is taken by years of good production that reap bad returns. There is always the question--"my father made a living on this farm: why can't I?"

To change a way of life that has been the same for so many years is difficult. My family is relatively lucky. We have only to change our jobs; our land will still be ours. However, there are others who have lost it all. Not only have they lost an occupation, but in many cases they have also lost their land and their home.

Our way of life is dying. Only time will tell if the death and decay of an increasing number of family farms will affect the world as drastically as events in the world have affected the family farm.

TEARS FROM HEAVEN

by Tom Barber

The weather was unbelievable for late March. The temperature was in the seventy degree range. That I could be sitting out on our deck in the back yard during the month of March seemed almost impossible. The sky was colored with puffs of light and dark blue mixed with streaks of yellow and coral from the early morning sunrise. Tulips and daffodils were everywhere, and birds sang in the maple trees above. The air was filled with the aroma of freshly cut grass, rain-washed soil, apple blossoms, and sun-warmed amaryllis petals. It seemed as if God, from his mighty throne in the firmament, was operating a giant bellows that was aimed directly at the sun, making it glow with heat like a huge ball of fire.

As I sipped Nestea from a plastic tumbler, I gazed across my family's vegetable garden toward the little white house directly behind our back yard. This little house had been previously owned by a charming old lady in her seventies. Everything about her had seemed to radiate beauty. She spent hours in her back yard trimming her rose bushes and tending her flower gardens. When she moved, my family was quite startled and saddened by the new neighbors who moved into her house.

From my position on the deck during this lovely spring day, I could look right into the new neighbors' back yard and get a small glimpse of what their lives were like. The rose bushes and flower gardens that our former neighbor had tended with such loving care had been left to shrivel and die in the heat of the sun. The aroma of the old lady's flowers had been replaced by the sickening smell of hot oil and gasoline that leaked from a motorcycle parked in their back yard. The little white house was no longer as white as it had been. Its sides were now streaked with yellow rust marks that had been made by rainstorms washing the rust from metal window shutters that had not been cared for.

Four or five dirty, tattered looking pre-schoolers were playing tag in the back yard, stomping out what little grass was left in the area. A little black puppy ran happily among them and bit playfully at their shoe strings. "You God-damned kids better quit stomping out all of my grass, or else I'll whip you hard enough to make the blood run down your legs!" bellowed the greasy looking mother, who was hanging clothes on an old clothes line nearby. The children scattered in all directions; the puppy put his tail between his legs and ran to his doghouse. I bit my tongue to keep from saying anything.

The weeks passed. The flowers bloomed, the puppy yelped, and the children cried. It was Easter Sunday. I was walking in our back yard, rejoicing at the signs of spring. Robins were eating sunflower seeds from the feeders in our back yard, and squirrels were shoving pecans around our deck with their noses. As I walked past the red picket fence that separated our yard from that of the new neighbors, I heard barking. I looked down and saw the coal black puppy looking up at me. Acting happy to see me, he jumped up and down on his side of the fence and wagged his tail. I thought of how lucky those poor children were to have such a loving animal. With great difficulty, I reached through the fence to pet the little dog as best as I could. "Get the hell in the house, Harley!" yelled a skinny looking hippie wearing a bandana and a leather motorcycle jacket. The puppy ran as fast as he could, but he didn't please the man waiting at the back door. As Harley, panting and exhausted, reached the door, the man hit him as hard as he could with a rolled up newspaper. Harley, yelping and crying, limped the rest of the way into the house.

As morning turned into afternoon, company came to our house for Easter dinner. Relatives arrived with cakes, cookies, casseroles, and Easter candies. The mood was jubilant. Following the afternoon meal, everyone gathered on the deck to play the traditional game of euchre. Since I was the only one who wasn't interested in the game, I pulled a lawn chair over to a far corner of the deck and let the sun bake into my skin.

Everyone seemed to be having a good time. Just as Uncle Emette was about to "shoot the moon" with his hand of cards, a familiar yelping sound cut into the laughter. Harley was tangled up in an old chain that had been lying in the neighbors' back yard. The man stormed out of the house toward the helpless pup. The hippie then started yanking and pulling at the chain, which got even tighter around Harley's legs. The more Harley cried, the more the man pulled. Suddenly, the man reached out and began hitting Harley, stopping only when the yelping stopped. He then removed the chain. Harley cried quietly after the man left. Again, I held my tongue.

A week went by, and it seemed as if Mother Nature had killed spring in an act of cold-blooded murder. Temperatures plunged, and the weather was miserable. The sky was a color too horribly gray to describe. The flowers in our yard shriveled into blackened balls, and the birds stopped singing. As I cooked lunch on our grill outdoors, the murky air settled in my lungs and seemed to lie there like a ten-pound weight. The odors of springtime had fled, replaced with what smelled like a combination of garbage, rotten potatoes, and vomit. As I glanced across the yard, I saw our neighbor carrying what looked like a bundle of coal black fur wrapped in a towel. He laid the bundle near the dog house and returned with a shovel. As he buried Harley, I turned back towards my grilling, thinking of the poor children and of their miserable parents. God's tears fell from the heavens. One of my own tears slid down my cheek and made a hissing sound as it hit the grill.

A LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN

by Teresa Pattengale

I always thought of Grandma's house as a little piece of heaven that had dropped out of the sky. Everything there was uniquely special to me. I can still remember particular feelings, smells, tastes, touches that when combined made it Grandma's house. Although I remember that my Grandfather lived up through the first thirteen years of my life, I fondly thought of the house as Grandma's. The house and every inch of Grandma's property held different memories for me.

Grandma's house did not have an exact color. There just wasn't a single word to describe her house. It was a blend of colors - red, yellow, and green - on asphalt shingling instead of wood siding like many houses had. Each window was trimmed in white, framed with red. I used to think that Santa Claus would have enjoyed it as a summer cottage. It was considered a one and one-half story home which, although small, was comprised of three tiny houses added together.

The upstairs consisted of two bedrooms aptly termed the "north room" and the "south room" by Grandma. The north room contained remnants from my brother's

adolescence. An old iron bed with stiff springs stood waiting for children to bounce on it. The walls were covered in an awful blue wallpaper peppered with airplanes. The walls followed the angles of the roof, but were cut short by a ceiling. Closets were lined in cardboard and covered with unmatched wallpaper, demonstrating the ingenuity of the depression years. The room smelled like an attic. Old, brittle linoleum covered most of the floor, and it crackled when you walked across it. Bare light bulbs were the only ceiling fixtures Grandma could afford. The south room was so warm it seemed to “smell” like sunshine. It was always cluttered with memorabilia from every holiday on a calendar, reminding us of Grandma’s appreciation for each new day. There were Christmas bows, Fourth of July table decorations, Thanksgiving centerpieces, and Easter baskets filled with plastic grass. This room stored celebration and fun.

The stairway that divided the north and south rooms made a right angle turn, halfway down. The bottom step presented you to Grandma’s bedroom. Every grandchild found trouble there. The lure of Emeraude perfume, Coty lipstick, and Blue Waltz dusting powder was a draw for a child. Grandma used to laugh heartily as each clown-faced-child appeared over the years. This room also had a serious side. My ears would ring from the quietness when I entered Grandma’s bedroom. I always felt I should hold my breath because of the concern this room brought to our family. There, Grandma recovered from her “spells”, which were actually heart attacks. The medicinal smell of tablets and capsules in prescription-filled envelopes from the country doctor, combined with the distinct tick of her alarm clock, told me Grandma was ill. If Grandma did not answer our call when we opened the door to her house, then we were drawn to this room immediately.

From the bedroom, you could see into the longest room of the house; it was the living room. This room was cheerful, sprinkled with knickknacks that reflected Grandma’s personality. She was so proud of the lace curtains that delicately shaded the windows. There was an upholstered rocking chair with wooden arms that had a mouselike squeak when you rocked. Grandma kept crossword puzzles, thick library novels, reading glasses, and a green marble and metal floor lamp next to the rocker. There were two unmatched couches, some assorted upholstered chairs, an old television set that came right after the radio era, and a platform rocker painted black that sat directly in front of the television screen. Coffee and end tables were covered with lace doilies and often held ceramic figurines. Furniture was rearranged at Christmas to accommodate the tree. I fondly remember the bubble lights adorning the Christmas tree. Connected to a bulbous base was a slender vial of colored water that bubbled after the lights heated up on the tree. Although Grandma lived on a fixed income, she always managed to tuck brightly wrapped packages of dish towels, throw pillows, crocheted slippers or potholders, or embroidered pillow cases under the tree. She gave so much of herself in the living room. In this room, the television never spoke when the air was filled with conversation. She always had time to listen, giving advice carefully but sparingly. This was a room for problems to be discussed in.

The dining room adjoined the living room. Saturday night potluck suppers happened here. The dining room table must have held a record number for seating people. Chairs bordered the perimeter of the room. The piping hot foods whet appetites with aromas and colors. The room was hot from the food, the oven, and the large crowd of people. Bric-a-brac cluttered Grandma’s buffet cabinet and fold-down desk. As younger people left the table, the conversation turned to adult jokes. Grandma would slap the arm of the perpetrator while chuckling with embarrassment. The dining room was a place for laughter.

Only a step away was the narrow, long kitchen. Here is where flour became bread, eggs became noodles, cans of pumpkin became pies, and Grandma's concoctions became masterpieces. Grandma's apron seemed to be permanently dusted with flour. She cooked with ease and confidence on her most modest appliances. When the meal was finished, the men migrated to the living room, while the women huddled in the kitchen to scrub and dry dishes. Here, the latest family news was exchanged. The kitchen housed the back door which led to outdoor wonders.

Before indoor plumbing modernized Grandma, the outhouse behind the garage met her needs. The outhouse was only a short jaunt from the house, but at times it seemed longer! The wood was a weathered grey; bushes and shrubs flourished around it. The door creaked as you opened it, and flies were always serenading those who stayed. The roof leaked only when it rained, and visitors stayed only as long as they could hold their breath.

Grandpa's tool shed was near the outhouse. The tool shed was 'off limits' to children, but we managed to sneak in anyway. Grandpa saved everything, and his tool shed reflected this: rusty nails, shovel handles, balls of old string, and even large marble-sized wads of gum. Tools hung from every available rafter or support beam; drawers were laden with their contents, and I used my hopscotch skills just to walk through a small portion of the shed. Grandpa would catch us when we cranked the handle of his grinder, because it sounded like a police siren from a gangster movie. Grandpa did not take kindly to small visitors in his shed so we would have to scatter quickly at the sound of his scorn.

The small hills that bordered Grandma's lot became downhill slopes for toddlers in the winter, hills for tumbling belly laughs in the summer. Flower beds lined her yard, and the driveway was every grandchild's rock collection. The plush grass was a carpet for our bare toes.

At one time, Grandma had a small fruit garden and orchard. Grandpa had prudently planted red and black raspberries, currants, gooseberries, rhubarb, strawberries, pears, and sour cherries plus a complete vegetable garden. Grandma would allow me to eat my fill, plus pick enough berries to sell in my little red wagon. I can still taste the puckering alum flavor of currants, the predictable cutting taste of sour cherries, the sweet, fruity but woody taste of raspberries, and the tartness of rhubarb. I was so impressed by Grandma's ability to be self-sustaining on only one and one-half acres of land; Grandma's sense of provision has stayed with me.

My husband and I now own that little piece of heaven. One year after Grandma died, we moved in and purposely changed each room of the house to make it uniquely our own. The most charming and memorable part of Grandma's house had left us - Grandma. Since we could never again add the exact ingredient to change the house back into Grandma's house, we turned it into our own home. Amazingly, though, through all of the house's transformations, we could never change one thing - love still lives here.

THE CREATION OF TRAGEDY OR THE TRAGEDY OF CREATION

by Susan Lichtman

There are almost as many myths interpreting the meaning of human life as there are eyes to watch its drama played out. There are as many stories to support certain beliefs as there are beliefs that can be conceived. But no matter how these myths are dissected and analyzed, there are always two opposite values that consistently appear: light and dark, good and bad, female and male, all placed in eternal opposition. Zen philosophy was one of the earliest philosophies that not only acknowledged the existence of opposites but also acknowledged the interdependence of these opposites in the form of the yin and yang. It concluded that one extreme could not exist without the other, but together, they could provide the necessary balance for the perpetuation of the ongoing harmony of the universe. These two values in conflict can be seen within two of the oldest stories humans have ever told to one another, from one generation to the next. They are the Creation myth in Genesis and Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex." Within both these stories is the justification for morality -- a patriarchal morality that would enable the ordering of the world along the lines of patriarchal leadership. Both stories use the same cast of characters; both stories conclude in the same fashion; both stories perform the same function within their respective societies. Taken together, they define the human condition from our earliest flashes of consciousness to twentieth century life. Separately, they demonstrate a development of that consciousness from the morality of the patriarchal fathers to the morality of Sophocles' Athens.

The ability for humans to relate to their peculiarly human condition is one that is as old as the human community itself. The ability to rationalize, intellectualize, and internalize the incomprehensible makes the human animal distinctly different from the beasts of the field. These ruminations of the human soul are echoed throughout the unique form of drama known as the ritual of tragedy. From the Greek ages onward, tragedy is easily recognized because of the guidelines and definitions set by Greek dramatists such as Aeschylus and Sophocles and developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Before the Greek ages, however, the elements of tragedy are more difficult to recognize. There is, however, a great deal of historical evidence unearthed by scholars such as Robert Graves and Eva Figs that link the development of tragedy to the earliest myths available to historical researchers: "The plots of the tragedies were almost all drawn from the great body of traditional myth, which was esteemed almost as a species of scripture" (Hadas 3). What Aristotle defined as tragedy stemmed from stories told over centuries by poets or seers, keepers of sacred traditions, teachers as well as artists with a status in the community somewhat analogous to that of a prophet in Israel.

Aristotle arrived at his classic definition of tragedy through his own observations and internalizations of the plays by Aeschylus and Sophocles, specifically Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex." Aristotle's analysis of tragedy's main characters stems from the development of that particular play's story-line, which, when seen in its own purity, presents a unique situation told again and again throughout antiquity. Tragedy, as defined by Aristotle, is the story of a man of position or honor who undergoes a revelation which destroys him but ultimately purifies his community. He moves

from ignorance to knowledge, his downfall caused by hubris or overbearing arrogance. According to Aristotle, this man's story must be so dramatic as to move the audience to great heights of emotion, causing a catharsis, or cleansing, of the entire community. The word "tragedy" itself is classically defined as "the goat's song" or "the lament of the goat" (Reese 583). This classic definition conjures up images not unlike the scapegoat, long a part of Hebrew tradition.

Tragedy was born within the scope of a communal society struggling to justify its own existence in a world that seemed to defy human rationalization. Every early society had its own theory for existence, its own justification for its call to greatness. Each evolved from the first story ever told, that of woman, man, and the ability to choose. The myth of Adam and Eve also has a long history shrouded in the mists of a prehistoric consciousness. It is also involved with man, woman, and free will. Both of these stories are justifications for an already established patriarchal order. They both deal with Higher Powers in relation to man; they both involve the individual's relationship to the entire community.

It sounds like a radical breach of historical, religious and literary doctrine to claim that "Oedipus Rex" and the story of Adam and Eve are the same story, but they are. They tell the same story with the same characters, and their heroes suffer the same fate. The story they tell is about a revolution that shook human history to its foundations and brought it today to the brink of its own annihilation. The stories relate, in symbolic terms, how the patriarchs overcame, subdued, and ultimately defeated the matriarchs. Adam is the son of God, Oedipus is the son of Laius, whose name means "king." Each of the young men has been placed in his peculiar position in the world by his respective father. Adam's name can be interpreted as "man" or "red Clay" (Walker 8). Oedipus' name means "swollen" or "wounded foot" (Graves 13). Both are symbolic of the young man about to be initiated into a clan or society by means of a process of cleansing -- be that ritual maiming or ritual blood-painting. Both undergo a process that takes them from ignorance to knowledge: Adam, by means of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17), Oedipus, by means of Teiresias, prophet/seer of Thebes. This process destroys the orderliness of their fathers' worlds and so they must pay in some way to restore order to their respective universes.

In a world of communal societies, where one's very existence is dependent upon the cohesiveness of the group, the sense of belonging becomes paramount to one's self-definition. To remove membership is to remove identification. Many clichés of modern times reflect this: Donne's "No man is an island", DeGaulle's "France c'est moi!" ("France is I!"), "A man without a country". The worst punishment in prehistorical times for someone who commits a tabooed action against the status quo, the community, would be to isolate that individual from his or her group. To be left alone in a hostile environment invites certain dangers and possible death. This is the fate of Adam and Oedipus. They are both forced out of their status quos, made to wander, homeless, for the length of their days. Sometimes this meant the creation of a new society, as in Adam's case; sometimes this meant permanent ostracism, as in the case of Oedipus. In both cases, their heirs are thus condemned by history.

In the same regard, Eve and Iocaste are the same woman; they are the daughters of divine royalty. Eve's name means "the mother of all living"; Iocaste's name is derived from Io, the moon-goddess, also considered to be the great mother of all living creatures. Both women lead their men to destruction: Eve, to the Tree of Knowledge; Iocaste, to the fated marriage bed. Both are warned of impending doom: Eve, by God through Adam; Iocaste, by Teiresias and their gods. In punishment for their wrongdoings: Eve is sentenced to a life of labor and mortal death; Iocaste

chooses death by her own hand. Both women are the last of the great matriarchs; their demise marks the end of matriarchal traditions and the beginnings of patriarchy and male lineage. The children of Eve are recorded as the descendants of Adam, and Iocaste's children are now the children of Oedipus. Female rites and rituals now become taboo because "without taboo, there can be no tragedy" (Figs 138).

The function of ritual in a society is to certify the group's cohesiveness, to explicate the group's values, to cleanse the group of that which might destroy it, and to insure the perpetuation of the group itself. If the Creation myth and the Oedipus myth are the same story, then by Aristotle's definition, they are both tragedies. Tragedy just may be the oldest group ritual humans ever developed. Its function, as Aristotle understood it, was to cleanse the group and fortify their identification as that group. By reenacting the same tragedy over and over again, the group learned to recognize its own values and allowed them to give an historical basis for what they saw as the human condition. This justified their social order (after all, if women were the unleashers of evil into the world, then women's subservient posture would be justified by the male hierarchy), and provided a basis of belief for future generations ("do as I say, not as I do").

Together, these stories describe the development of patriarchal morality and the breakdown of the matriarchal standards prehistory had supported. Death and mortality break the cycle of the feminine concept of rebirth inherent in matriarchal philosophy (Walker 847) in order to claim "for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return" (Genesis 3:18). Adam's revelation is a moral one; no longer can he remain naked with Eve. No longer is he an innocent. Oedipus' revelation is also a moral one; he, too, is no longer an innocent. Both now must face the responsibility inherent in their actions. The knowledge of good and evil becomes moral knowledge for mortal beings.

Both stories say that we are destined to be tragic, that tragedy is the ability to witness the eternal but to be unable to ever touch it, never able to possess it. The two stories together define the human condition. One myth gave birth to the other; they carry the same relationship as parent to child, teacher to student, divine to supplicant. One gave the other birth; the other gave the first definition. They say we are mortal creatures, conscious at some point between birth and death, aware always of our limitations, and never quite appreciative of our aspirations.

There is, however, one point that both stories fail to rectify within their structures. If all ancient myth concerns itself with two opposite values in conflict, then where in either story are the female and male elements reconciled in balance and harmony? Both the female and the male aspects, in either story, are left severed and soulless. They are not made stronger by their discoveries but are left weaker by them instead. There is no great change brought about by their tragic circumstances -- only knowledge that paralyzes them and makes them ineffectual within their own lives. The audience may leave cleansed, but also drained and empty. And the moment of reconciliation between creator and created is lost again forever.

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A CELEBRATION FOR ADRIENNE RICH

by Carol D'Aloisio

Adrienne has lived with me, I think I
Have touched her hair and heard her soft voice
One night at midnight when the children were
Sleeping, and I was so cold, and alone, and
Mute. God, I could not even speak and she
Shouted for me--screamed, in a lover's voice
That life was full and long and good.
She whispered, then I dreamed, that my breasts
Were not mythological beasts, that my body
Was not a vast citadel, misunderstood,
Besieged by chemicals and the needs of others,
But a field for growing life and yielding hope;
That my heart, always at wonder and seldom
At rest, was allowed not to pigeonhole,
Categorize and control, but could savor,
And touch, and stand, open-mouthed,
And gaze at beauty. She shouted for me, and said
That only the woman in the woman lives,
Reaches, grows, bends, touches.
She convinced me.

The power of the feminine is what I have;
I have always owned it and it has always
Nurtured me. I needn't have looked,
But I couldn't have seen it without looking
At something else.
The power of men is for men, ill-fitting
On this small and glorious soul. Some goddess
Has left for me a mantle of my own,
And in its deepest pocket is The Book of Rhythms:
Seasonal rhythms, lunar rhythms, diurnal rhythms:
The crooning, rocking rhythms of the night,
The headlong, feeding rhythms of the day.
And I am better suited--with circles of life,
Cycles of light, symbols of love.

This is my celebration for Adrienne,
For all the women who have smiled and pointed.
This is my coming-home.

GIDEON v. WAINWRIGHT: THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA IN AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE

by Ernest Richard Tope

The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees that all citizens accused of crime shall have the assistance of counsel. The right of an accused to have the aid of counsel in presenting his defense to a criminal charge is undoubtedly the most important privilege provided to criminal defendants by the federal Bill of Rights. The primary purpose of this Constitutional safeguard is to insure that the accused does not suffer criminal conviction or the loss of liberty due to ignorance of the law. Without such an assurance other Constitutional guarantees would be, in most cases, of little avail.

Even an educated and intelligent layman often has little, if any, training in the science of law. Many times the untrained criminal defendant does not possess the requisite knowledge necessary to protect himself from the hazards which accompany self-representation. The uncounseled defendant is too often unfamiliar with the rules of evidence, lacks the skill to pursue discovery techniques, and does not have sufficient resources and research materials to determine his legal defenses. Equally important in this regard is that the layman may not be able to articulate his legal defenses, even if they are known to him, to the jury or judge hearing the case. Essentially, a single mistake made during the course of the trial, whether the mistake be the result of carelessness, oversight or inadvertence, can determine the outcome of a case. Thus, the necessity for a trained and experienced advocate is not only important but is a vital ingredient of an adequate defense.

While the courts have generally recognized the necessity for a criminal defendant to be represented by competent counsel, the right of a poor person to be represented by counsel at public expense in a state court prosecution has been the subject of serious dispute. Historically the Sixth Amendment guaranty to counsel has been only applicable to federal prosecutions. It was not until recent years that the right to counsel has been declared obligatory upon the states by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

On March 18, 1963, the landmark case of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, 372 U.S. 335 (1963), was decided by the United States Supreme Court. In the *Gideon* case, the defendant was charged in a Florida state court with breaking and entering into a poolroom with intent to commit a misdemeanor. The offense was a felony under Florida law. Gideon was poor and appeared in court without funds and without counsel. He requested the court to appoint a lawyer to represent him, and the request was denied on the basis that Florida law permitted appointment of counsel for indigent defendants only in prosecutions for capital offenses. Gideon was then tried by a jury and, it was noted, conducted his defense about as well as could be expected from a layman, but was convicted and sentenced to serve five years in the Florida State Penitentiary.

After Gideon was sentenced to prison, he began his battle for freedom by filing a petition for writ of *habeas corpus* in the Florida courts. Gideon drafted his own legal documents and asked the Supreme Court of Florida to rule that he was entitled, as a matter of Constitutional right, to have the assistance of counsel at his criminal trial. The Florida Supreme Court denied Gideon's request for relief, and the case was

eventually reviewed by the United States Supreme Court. The high court reversed Gideon's conviction, holding that the "assistance of counsel clause of the Sixth Amendment is made obligatory on the states by the Fourteenth Amendment." The case was then remanded back to the Florida courts with specific instructions to appoint Gideon a pauper counsel. Gideon was eventually retried, this time with court-appointed counsel, and was acquitted.

The significance of the decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright* is obvious. For the first time since December 15, 1791, when the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, the right to counsel had been declared to be binding on the states. The *Gideon* decision meant that state governments, like the federal government, could no longer criminally prosecute a poor defendant without first providing him with the assistance of counsel to prepare his defense. Justice, in both state and federal judiciaries, now had to be dispensed equally and without regard to the defendant's financial status. State prosecutions could no longer consist of a defendant's being arrested for a crime on Monday, a makeshift trial being conducted for the defendant on Tuesday, and the so-called menace being conveniently warehoused in a prison cell for the next twenty years of his life on Wednesday morning.

Prior to the *Gideon* decision, although the courts recognized the importance of the right to counsel, state courts were not required to appoint counsel for poor criminal defendants unless the defendant was charged with a capital offense. There is no way to calculate how many cases may have resulted in a different verdict if poor state defendants, prior to the *Gideon* decision, had been afforded their Sixth Amendment right to counsel. Nevertheless, it is evident, in light of the arbitrary and capricious denial of this fundamental right for a period in aggregate of 172 years, that the number has the probability of being high.

Without question, *Gideon v. Wainwright* is the most important criminal case decided by the Supreme Court of the United States this century. The *Gideon* court tore down a deeply rooted injustice, which had served as a barricade between our federal Bill of Rights and the various state courts across our nation. *Gideon* paved the path, which has now become a road, requiring that court-appointed counsel be provided for *all* pauper criminal defendants at *any* critical stage of the proceedings pending against them. This includes not only at trial but also during pretrial and post-trial procedures. Learned counsel's presence serves to safeguard the unwary and unskilled indigent defendant's right to a fair trial which, in turn, greatly reduces the risk of an innocent defendant's being unjustly sentenced to prison.

The exact number of persons who have been made to suffer criminal convictions and the loss of liberty simply because they could not afford counsel to aid them in establishing their innocence will never be known. Regardless, we can find comfort in knowing that Clarence Earl Gideon, albeit belatedly, was spared this injustice. The final outcome of Gideon's case restores a sense of fairness to our system of justice and is an exemplification that the right to counsel is the most important right guaranteed to persons accused of crime in the United States. It is a right that must be jealously protected.

COCOONS

by David Grau

September 22, 1986

Dear Society,

The time for change is upon us. In view of the rapidly dissipating values in American life, the disintegrating moral foundation, and the human obsolescence in the name of progress, we have decided to take the first step of the journey. We have chosen to isolate ourselves in a figurative manner, forsaking our supportive roles as a part of the communal cause. We will ignore all that which is unacceptable and intolerable to us, in order that we might reestablish our fundamental rights as individuals. We shall exist in "cocoons", so to speak, until such time as we have acquired the wisdom and tolerance to change and improve upon the present inequities and injustices.

As we take leave of your society, we believe it to be in the best interests of all concerned to explain the reasoning behind this evolution. In the context of this letter, we intend to convey the futility we feel as a result of your regressive tendencies. These problems, we realize, are only a few of the symptoms of a much more serious disease. But the existence of these symptoms is sufficient cause for concern. We only hope that, given your present status, Society, you are able to comprehend the words you will read. In keeping with our utilitarian nature, we have elected an individual spokesperson to explain why our actions have become necessary.

I have turned away from you, Society, because you do not value intelligence. You idolize the rich and famous, the movie stars and athletes. You judge quality by the quantity of entertainment provided. Your people no longer strive to obtain the intellectual prowess necessary to understand and overcome the triviality in their lives. The anti-intellectualism that has engulfed American attitudes and ideas is frightening. Weak and shallow minds are the rule in this, the age of video enlightenment. As a technological power, this nation is progressing rapidly. As an intellectual power, however, we are regressing at an equally fast and disturbing pace. The time to change is right now, before the moment fades away and is lost. We must teach our children that books are as satisfying and important as basketball. We must respect and praise their ability to think as individuals. I choose, therefore, to isolate myself from you, Society, lest I fall victim to your shallow methods of life.

I have turned away from you, Society, because I am poor. It is through the possession of monetary wealth that you recognize success. But even the future that once promised comfort and security has closed its doors in my face. I have watched the working class fight and struggle against economic hardships, only to be set back again and again. Even now the working people are helpless, sliding downward, looking up, and hating it. Because of the enormous economic inequalities that exist in this country, there is very little hope for improvement in our lifetime. I am part of this working class. If I accept your value system, Society, I must in turn accept myself as inferior. If I choose not to accept your values, then I am alone. Within the safety of my "cocoon", I can accept myself as I am, rich or poor.

I have turned away from you, Society, because I am in opposition to your class system. I will not tolerate the classification of people based upon economic or environmental factors. You believe that it is in accordance with the law of nature that we have rich and poor. You accept the homeless and hungry as unavoidable by-products of a competitive society. We believe that there are poor because there are rich. I charge you, Society, with creating the false impression that class mobility is easy to obtain for those willing to work hard enough and long enough towards the profitability of the class hierarchy. This misconception is fueled by the anti-intellectual movement created by the values that you, Society, have endorsed. The status of lower class Americans is nothing short of imprisonment, economically and intellectually. If you will not address this problem with me, Society, then I will fight it alone.

I have turned away from you, Society, because you have replaced me. In the name of progress I have lost my identity. In the name of speed and efficiency I have stopped being a person. The computers at my place of employment issue a paycheck every week to number 307-72-8690. To the people and machines in our payroll department, I have conveniently ceased to exist as a person. My bank teller, who used to be an intelligent and well-spoken young lady, is now about three feet square, computerized, and covered with confusing buttons. In order to function with the proper speed and effectiveness, you, Society, keep all human contact to an absolute minimum. While technology has made our lives easier in many respects, it has also contributed to our obsolescence and inadequacy. The time and effort to communicate, to get involved, is simply not in keeping with the goals of speed and efficiency. It is essential that, while reaping the benefits of technology, we work to overcome the regressive trends mechanization can cause. We must invest time, money, and education in ourselves to profit in the long run.

Perhaps, Society, you question our morality in turning away from you at this time. We do not turn away from you in an attempt to further degrade your people, but to save ourselves while there is still time. Your values, goals, and judgments are not acceptable to us. We support the acquisition of intelligence over the attainment of wealth in every instance. We believe that all people, regardless of their class, should be granted an equal opportunity to pursue their interests. We are idealistic, while you are materialistic. Thus, in establishing our views, we are separate and isolated already. If the words in this letter caused you to think, then you have begun the evolution to a new and higher level, and we seek a common good through personal improvement. If you laughed, Society, then I know that I have judged you correctly.

Sincerely,

Humankind

THE WORLD CONTRACTED TO A RECOGNIZABLE IMAGE: WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

by Judith E. Watson

William Carlos Williams was a paradox: he never completely resolved in his mind what he wanted to do as a poet. In the mid-1930's he wrote that a poet must plumb the depths of the personality. He must allow genius to enter the mind mysteriously, letting the words simply come. (Yeats' automatic writing comes to mind.) Poems, he felt, are made from the poet's released personality. By the late 1950's, however, Williams was of the opinion that a poem was a manufactured artifact, something *made*, a machine that either worked or did not. Poems were not "about" anything. This latter definition harkened back to the Modernist theory of his youth and is evident in much of his work.

The exact style of Williams' poetry is still an unsettled matter. In the preface to William's *Collected Poems* in 1934, Wallace Stevens wrote:

There are so many things to say about him.
The first is that he is a romantic poet.
This will horrify him. Yet the proof is
everywhere - (Waggoner 374).

Williams was indeed horrified; he never allowed the preface to be reprinted.

Poet-critic Yvor Winters agreed with Stevens, writing in 1939:

W.C. Williams, in his view of life and of poetry, is an uncompromising romantic. He believes in the surrender to feeling and to instinct as the only way to wisdom and to art. (66)

Winters cites "The Widow's Lament in Springtime" as perhaps the best of this type of poem, calling it "one of the most moving compositions of our time" (67). Twenty-five years later, however, he revised his opinion of much of Williams' work; he now felt "Lament" was "soft" although charming and gentle. His final critique of Williams--as poet and man--was typically unequivocal:

To say that Williams was anti-intellectual would be almost an exaggeration: he did not know what the intellect was. He was a foolish and ignorant man, but at moments a fine stylist (69).

In some respects the allegation of Romanticism, to which Williams strongly objected, seems to have some validity. He wrote of having been strongly influenced, early in his career, by Keats. Like the Romantics, he clearly had a deep sense of the beauty of the temporal world, being one of our chief poets of flowers and foliage; he had a sense of sympathy for the obscure and humble people around him; he rebelled against tyrannical authority--in his case the tyranny of academe and of poetic form. "The Widow's Lament in Springtime" (Ellman and O'Clair 289) is surely a poem of emotion, but it is not sentimental.

In this poem the speaker tries to relate the world to herself: what is she doing in a world at once so familiar and yet now so changed? She notices the foliage around her, is aware of colors, as she is each spring: "The plumtree is white today/ with masses of flowers./ Masses of flowers/ loaded the cherry branches/ and color some bushes/ yellow and some red/." Her world has contracted to a recognizable image.

But it is an altered image: "...the grief in my heart/ is stronger than they/ for though they were my joy/ formerly, today I notice them/ and turned away forgetting."

The widow makes no mention of the fine qualities of her dead husband. She does not tell us that she feels the stabbing pain of loss. She does not weep or wail or gnash her teeth. We see her not as a woman keening for her mate but as what she is: a woman suffering daily the quiet, enervating ache of absolute separation.

I understand this woman very well. So does Williams. He tells us only at the end of the poem how great her grief is: "I feel that I would like/ to go there/ and fall into those flowers/ and sink into the marsh near them." We see in a flash what sorrow really is.

The widow's world has contracted to a recognizable image indeed. The image is not only that of the present moment but also of a memory. In the here and now, the world offers her an escape--one she will not take: "I feel I would like/ to go there..." She will not sink into the marsh because she is not a tragic heroine. She is one of the obscure people about whom the poet so often wrote with feeling but in unsentimental language.

Williams considered himself a "realist" and a "naturalist". He felt the poetry of the Nineteenth Century was littered with messy sentimentalism and was determined to find a new mode. To him realism meant discovering the promise of life in the most unlikely places (beside the road to a hospital, for example). Williams has been called an "imagist". Imagism, however, is a self-limiting pursuit. Sooner or later the poet must tire of simply presenting objects. Poetry written solely in the imagist style necessarily lacks depth. (Moreover, it is difficult to explicate!) Certainly Williams wrote many poems which fit the imagist mold, if we consider that, in his brand of imagism, he was concerned with measured poetic *style* in forming an image.

This is how Williams defined poetry:

A poem is a complete little universe. It exists separately. Any poem that has worth expresses the whole life of the poet. It gives a view of what the poet is (Pearce 127).

A poem may exist separately as a complete little universe, but Williams does not give us a view of his whole life in any one of his poems. He reveals too little of himself; he rarely writes with any obvious point of view. He more nearly achieves his aim of making the poem "the radiant gist that/ resists the final crystalization/. in the pitch-blend/ the radiant gist" (Pearce 346).

Williams' attempt to achieve "the radiant gist" often takes the form of the delineation of separateness by drawing our vision to the insignificant, the prosaic. An example of this mode may be found in an early poem, "Pastoral":

The little sparrows
hop ingenuously
about the pavement
quarreling
with sharp voices
over those things
that interest them.
But we who are wiser
shut ourselves in
on either hand
and no one knows
whether we think good
or evil.
Meanwhile,
the old man who goes about
gathering dog-lime
walks in the gutter
without looking up
and his tread
is more majestic than
that of the Episcopal minister
approaching the pulpit
of a Sunday.
These things
astonish me beyond words.

In this poem we can see separateness in terms not only of the existence of things apart from each other---entities that have their being without relationship to other things---but also in terms of alienation. Men are alienated from each other, unaware of each other: "...we who are wiser/ shut ourselves in/ on either hand." And the menial who cleans the streets of dog feces walks "without looking up". But---an anomaly---"...his tread is more majestic than/ that of the Episcopal minister/ approaching the pulpit..." Williams does not refer to a "Baptist minister"; the allusion to a cleric of the High Church must have been neither arbitrary choice nor accommodation to meter. That the man walking in the gutter could have so great a sense of self that he walks majestically is a source of astonishment. He is surely not aware that the minister, not he, is expected to show such dignity in his tread.

The sparrows hop "ingenuously" on the pavement. They have no motives except those of self. Too naive to mask their sensibilities (if indeed they have any---and Williams believes they must, since they have "interests"), they exist separately from the old man, from the minister, from those who shut themselves in, and even from the poet. All of them are insignificant within the larger scheme, but they combine to reveal suddenly---through the poet's perception and imagination---that a coherent relationship among them is unnecessary. They are not transcendent, nor must they be to have validity. It is enough that they are part of our world and that we experience them first-hand.

Williams contracts time and place into the present, vital moment. Senses perceive entities that halt, momentarily, the flux of life. In "Spring and All" (Ellman and O'Clair 290) we are made aware of things by seeing them clearly, separately: "blue mottled clouds"; "dried weeds"; "lifeless vines"; "the stiff curl of wildcarrot leaf". Here, indeed, we have the world contracted into a recognizable image. We have seen these things before. The clouds, the foliage are exactly what they are; they are not symbols. (We must resist the impulse, reading Williams, to assign transcendent meanings to things; we are not asked to invest them with significance beyond that which they already have in and of themselves.)

The familiar objects in "Spring and All" certainly lie "under the direct scrutiny of the senses." By finally perceiving them in their unique separateness, we come to understand that there exists within earth's flux a sort of continuity.

Williams believed in the value of life itself. There was no need, he felt, for a rebirth in some dubious afterlife. The earth continually replenishes and revives itself, perennially assisting at its own rebirth. In virtually all his poems about natural phenomena, we may see earth's flora as metaphor for renaissance. (This, I believe, is not inconsistent with Williams' avoidance of symbology. In "Peterson" he wrote that there are "no ideas but in things." While he wanted his readers to experience, through the imagination, the importance of *das Ding an sich*, he would surely allow the imagination to form ideas as well.) We may see a tree as only itself, recognize and appreciate it for itself alone, and still know that, being of the earth, it is regenerative.

Young Sycamore

I must tell you
this young tree
whose round and firm trunk
between the wet

pavement and the gutter
(where water
is trickling) rises
bodily

into the air with
one undulant
thrust half its height---
and then

dividing and waning
sending out
young branches on
all sides---

hung with cocoons
it thins
till nothing is left of it
but two

eccentric knotted
twigs
bending forward
hornlike at the top

The sycamore is not a symbol. Neither does it rise to "heaven" nor serve to bind all of nature into some mystical union. But in the first line Williams tells us the tree is important and must be seen. We feel the urgency and clarity of the moment.

The tree may also be seen as a metaphor for regeneration. It has vitality: "this young tree/ ...rises/ bodily into the air with/ one undulant thrust..." It also has a sort of personality: "...nothing is left of it/ but two/ eccentric knotted/ twigs/ bending forward/ hornlike at the top." We are not told it, but we can imagine that the tree is growing vigorously and will continue to do so.

More importantly, in order to justify Williams' "I must tell you", we must remember a basic aim of his poetry: the exposing of the wonder of a world obscured by daily life. This he accomplishes through immediacy of experience---the radiant gist---the contracting of the world into a recognizable image. We recognize and experience the sycamore without the intervention by Williams of his own private experience. At the moment we truly see the tree, we are aware of the sheer energy of form thrusting upward through the earth. The sycamore has more than an existence of its own; it fosters life. The cocoons it shelters harbor the fetal promises of the renewal of the growth cycle.

William Carlos Williams felt that academicism was the bane of modern man. Man's alienation from the temporal world could be traced, in part, to his failure to revive the language, to make it contemporary and fresh, to use it in new ways. Williams believed there was an American idiom, and he wanted to express it. No explanatory footnotes to classical allusions are necessary in Williams' work; he found such references---indeed the necessity for them---antithetical to the modern poetic movement. Given his theory of poetic style and use---and the fact of his non-transcendental philosophy of life---we can understand the horror with which Williams viewed Eliot's "The Waste Land". In 1951 he wrote:

Then out of the blue The Dial brought out "The Waste Land" and all our hilarity ended. It wiped out our world as if an atom bomb had been dropped upon it and our brave sallies into the unknown were turned to dust.

To me especially it struck like a sardonic bullet. I felt at once that it had set me back 20 years, and I'm sure it did. Critically Eliot returned us to the classroom just the moment when I felt that we were on the point of an escape to matters much closer to the essence of a new art form itself---rooted in the locality which would give it fruit. I knew at once that in certain ways I was almost defeated.

Eliot had turned his back on the possibility of reviving my world. And being an accomplished craftsman, better skilled in some ways that I could ever hope to be, I had to watch him carry my world off with him, the fool, to the enemy (Waggoner 374).

No matter that Williams cannot be definitively labeled. It is not really necessary to know whether he was a romantic imagist or a realist-naturalist. In whatever guise, he is an important modern poet. He assisted in freeing poetry of the form found necessary by Nineteenth Century poets. Williams' poetry is not a formalized affair but is a catalyst for direct contact with the world---whole, free, creative. At its best, his poetry is a blending of the power of the thing with the power of the idea: the world contracted to a recognizable image.

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BIOGRAPHIES

BARBER, TOM

Tom, an elementary education major, wrote his award-winning entry in English 102: the 1986 Portals contains one of his essays from English 101.

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Carol, now employed by a publishing company in Chicago, is a 1987 graduate from Purdue with a major in English. She is a former Writing Center tutor.

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David, also a Writing Center tutor, is a junior pursuing a degree in liberal studies. He is currently working on a novel.

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Maureen, whose home is in Wanatah, is a student in the Community College. She has not yet declared a major.

LICHTMAN, SUSAN

The senior member of the Writing Center tutoring staff, Susan has won numerous writing awards at PU/NC as well as first prize in a Lafayette contest. She is a 1987 Purdue graduate and the first recipient of the John J. Stanfield Scholarship, given for excellence in English.

MCLAUGHLIN, TOM

Tom is a freshman and lives in Valparaiso. He plans a career in supervision.

PATTENGALE, TERESA

Teresa is a freshman in the nursing program at PU/NC. She lives in Union Mills.

SHERRY, E. THOMAS

Tom is a sophomore with a major in general business.

TOPE, ERNEST RICHARD

Ernest is also a sophomore majoring in general business.

WATSON, JUDITH E.

Judith, who lives in Valparaiso, is a graduate student in elementary education.

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